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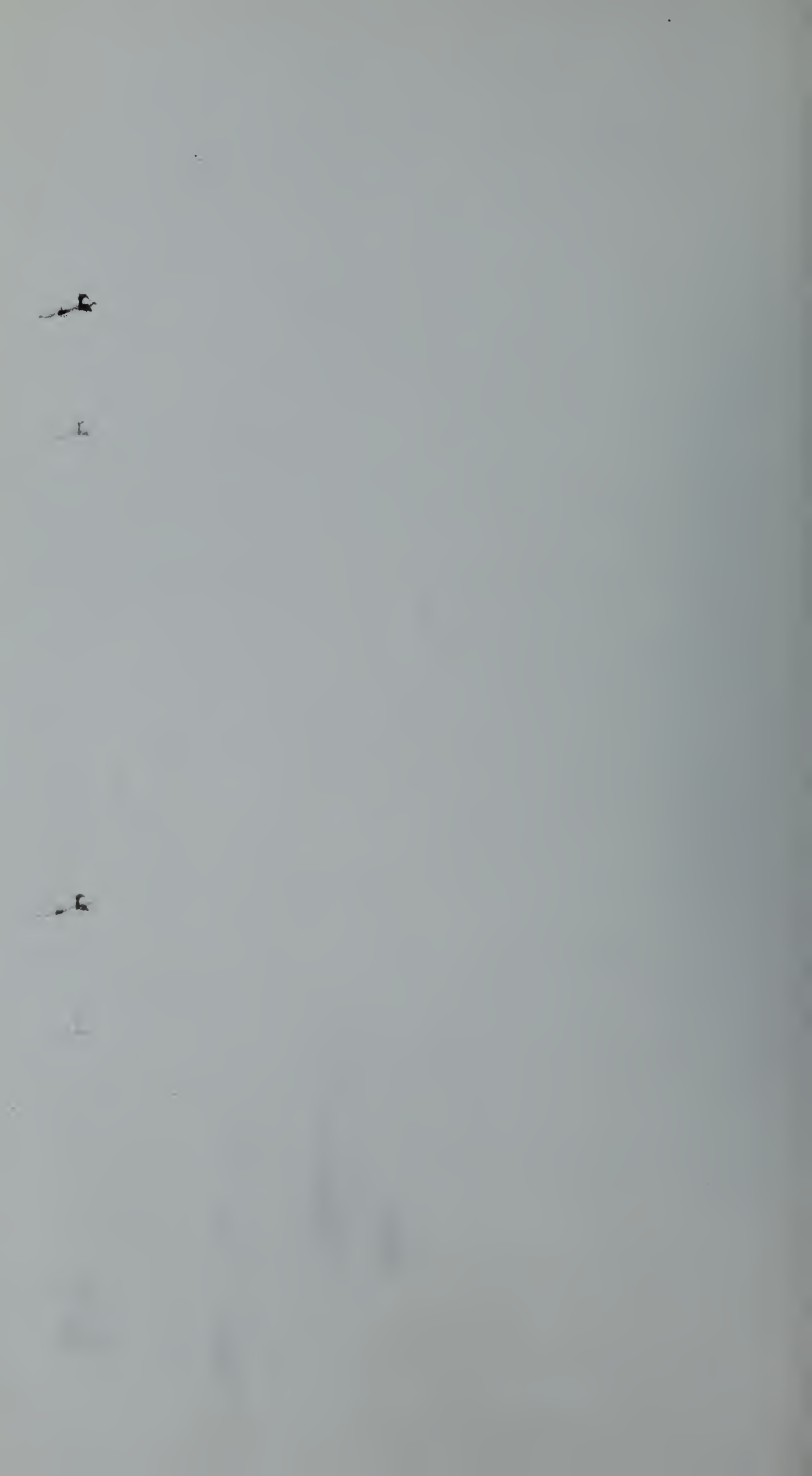
ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR 1951





BOROUGH OF BRIDGNORTH

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE AUTHORITY

1 9 5 1

Medical Officer of Health: L.E. Dickson, M.D., B.S.
(part time).

Sanitary Inspector and Food Inspector: E.J. Morgans, B.Sc., M.R.S.I.

Additional Sanitary Officer: R.V. Webb, M.R.S.I.

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BOROUGH OF BRIDGNORTH

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

1951

To the Mayor; Aldermen and Councillors:

Mr. Mayor and Gentlemen,

I have the honour of presenting the Annual Report on the health of your Borough for the year ending 31st December, 1951. Your late Medical Officer, Dr. L.E. Dickson, retired at the end of the year after holding the post for more than forty years and has since then died.

The statistics relating to the Public Health of the Borough are satisfactory and attention may be drawn to the fact that there were no deaths of infants under one year of age in the town during the year. The Infantile Mortality Rate is therefore NIL as compared with a rate of 29.6 for the whole country. There were no Puerperal Deaths.

There was no serious incidence of Infectious Disease in the town and no deaths from any such disease took place.

The shortage of houses continues, but 62 houses were completed during the year and 34 were under construction at the end of the year. Of these totals, 52 and 27 were Council Houses. The Council now own 334 houses or 17% of the total number in the Borough. A serious problem also is the gradual deterioration of so many of the older houses. Many of these are becoming more and more unfit each year and so far very little has been done to improve such houses. It is obvious that a new National Policy will have to be formulated to deal with this matter.

Plans for new sewerage and sewage disposal works have been prepared by the Council's Engineers and submitted to the Ministry for approval. It is to be hoped that approval will be forthcoming so that work may be commenced on this scheme as soon as possible.

I would like to thank Mr. Morgans for his assistance in preparing some of the Sections of the Report.

I have the honour to be,
Your obedient Servant,

JAMES L. GREGORY

Medical Officer of Health

Bridgnorth.

17th September, 1952.

BOROUGH OF BRIDGNORTH

VITAL STATISTICS - 1951

Live Births -	<u>Total</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>
Legitimate	98	51	47
Illegitimate	4	2	2

Birth-rate per 1,000 of population = 16.5

Still Births -			
Legitimate	3	2	1
Illegitimate	1	1	-

Still-birth rate per 1,000 total births = 37.7

Deaths -	99	42	57
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Death-rate per 1,000 of population = 16.07

Deaths from Puerperal Causes -	<u>Number</u>	<u>Rate per</u> <u>1,000 total</u> <u>births</u>
(a) From Puerperal Sepsis	Nil	-
(b) From other Puerperal Causes	Nil	-
Total	Nil	-

Deaths of Infants under one year	<u>Number</u>	<u>Rate per</u> <u>1,000 total</u> <u>births</u>
(a) Legitimate children per 1,000 live legitimate births	Nil	-
(b) Illegitimate children per 1,000 live illegitimate births	Nil	-
(c) All children per 1,000 total live births	Nil	-

Deaths from -	<u>Number</u>
Cancer	19
Measles	-
Whooping Cough	-
Tuberculosis -	
Pulmonary	4
Non-pulmonary	-

The 'corrected' figures for Birth-rate and Death-rate are as follows -

Birth-rate (corrected) = 17.1 per 1,000 of population.
Death-rate (corrected) = 13.4 per 1,000 of population.

The corresponding rates for the whole country were -

Birth-rate = 15.5 per 1,000.

Death-rate = 12.5 per 1,000

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONSGENERAL STATISTICS

Area (in acres).	2,645
Registrar-General's estimate of the population as at mid-1951.	6,158
Number of Inhabited Houses.	1,942
Rateable Value of the District.	£32,394
Estimated product of 1d. Rate.	£122. 11s. 9d.

NOTES ON VITAL STATISTICSBirths and Birth-Rates.

A total of 102 Births were registered during the year and of these 98 were legitimate and 4 illegitimate. The 'crude' Birth-rate is therefore 16.5 but when corrected for age and sex distribution it is 17.1. This is a higher rate than that for the country generally. (England & Wales B.R. = 15.5).

Still-Births.

These numbered 4 in all and the rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births was 37.7. (0.064 per 1,000 of the population).

Deaths and Death-rates.

A total of 99 deaths were registered (42 male and 57 female) and the 'crude' death rate was 16.07 per 1,000 of the population. The 'corrected' death rate was 13.4 as compared with 12.5 for the whole country.

The chief causes of death were diseases of the cardiovascular system and Cancer. These accounted for 61 out of the 99 deaths.

With the exception of 5 deaths from Tuberculosis of the Lungs there were no deaths from infectious diseases during the year.

No Puerperal Deaths were registered and there was no death of any child under the age of one year.

Infant Mortality.

As stated above no infant death took place in the Borough during the year. The saving of infant lives during the last 40 or 50 years has been a marked feature in this country and is a tribute to all those whose work has been directed to this end. (The I.M.Rate for England & Wales was 29.6).

Puerperal Deaths.

No deaths of women from causes due to pregnancy or child-birth were notified during the year.

Natural Increase of Population.

The births exceeded deaths by three.

Clinics.

There is a Minor Ailment Clinic for Schoolchildren at Northgate, Bridgnorth, and also a Welfare Centre for children under school age.

The Clinics for Venereal Diseases and for Tuberculosis are at Shrewsbury and there are also Clinics for the former diseases at Wolverhampton and at Kidderminster.

An after-care Clinic for Orthopaedic cases is held on alternate Mondays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Bridgnorth.

The Maternity and Child Welfare Centre is held on Mondays from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The School Clinic is held daily. (Mondays 10 - 11 a.m., other days 9 - 10 a.m.).

Home Help Service.

During the year there was a suggestion that this Service, which is administered by the County Council, should be discontinued, as it had not been used enough to justify the employment of the Home Helps. The Council asked the County Health Committee to continue the Service and this has been done and it is hoped that more use may be made of it.

At the present time, when there is such a great shortage of domestic workers throughout the country, such a service as this should be of great value to many families who through sickness or other reasons are in need of help in their homes. In some cases it may be possible for old people to remain in their homes if some assistance can be given with house work. Such people might otherwise have to be moved to an Institution.

National Assistance Act, 1948.

No action was taken in any case during the year under Section 47 of this Act. This Section gives power to the Local Authority to apply for an Order to have persons removed to an Institution when they are unable to get proper care and attention at home.

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICESStaff.

The names and qualifications of Officers are given at the beginning of the Report. There is a Medical Officer of Health (part time), a Chief Sanitary Inspector who is also Surveyor, and an Additional Inspector who is Assistant Surveyor. Mr. D.H. Young resigned from the latter Post at the end of 1950 and Mr. R.V. Webb was appointed in his place in February, 1951.

At the end of the year Dr. L.E. Dickson, who had been Medical Officer of Health for over forty years, resigned owing to ill-health and he died in August 1952. After his retirement the Council presented Dr. Dickson with the Freedom of the Borough as a token of their appreciation of his long and valued services as Medical Officer of Health.

Laboratory Facilities.

Bacteriological examinations of water, milk, ice cream, etc. are carried out at the Public Health Laboratory, Royal Salop Infirmary, Shrewsbury. Chemical examinations of water samples and of sewage effluents are carried out at the Laboratory at Chester. Close co-operation is maintained with the laboratories and much help is obtained from them.

Nursing in the Home.

Under the National Health Service Act, 1946, these services are controlled by the Health Department of the Salop County Council. Particulars of them will be found in the Annual Report of the County Medical Officer. The addresses and telephone numbers of the Nurses and Mid-wives in Bridgnorth are as follows:-

<u>Address</u>	<u>Telephone Number</u>
1, Innage Gardens.	Bridgnorth 3225
Morvale, Victoria Road.	" 3280
51, Sydney Cottage Drive.	" 3372

Ambulance Services.

The Central Ambulance Depot for the County is now at Shrewsbury. The telephone number is Shrewsbury 2626. Ambulances required for long distances may be obtained from the Central Depot. In addition there are two ambulances and one car stationed at Bridgnorth and these are available for short journeys. The telephone number is Bridgnorth 2303.

Hospital Accommodation.

The hospitals available for residents in the Borough have been detailed in previous reports and there have been no changes during the year. Innage House is in part an Institution for the aged and infirm of both sexes and also there are beds for female patients who do not require specialised hospital treatment. The question of closing these latter beds and removing the patients to Shifnal Hospital has been under consideration by the Hospital Management Committee.

SECTION C.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

This section of the Report deals with water supplies, sewerage and sewage disposal, refuse collection and disposal and other matters concerned with environmental hygiene. I am indebted to the Council's Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector, Mr. E.J. Morgans, for most of the facts and figures contained in this and the subsequent two sections of the Report.

WATER SUPPLIES

The town's main supply is from two bore-holes at Rindleford Mill in the Parish of Worfield in the Bridgnorth Rural District. Water is delivered through a 10" diameter rising main to two service reservoirs of a capacity of 450,000 gallons situated at Hermitage Hill, north east of the town and just outside the Borough Boundary. The present pumping plant at Rindleford is capable of delivering 552,000 gallons per 24 hours. Most of the Borough is supplied by gravity from the Reservoir but there is a booster station at Salop Street with a capacity of 3,000 gallons per hour. Water is in addition supplied to some districts outside the Borough.

Sufficiency of Supplies.

During the year the supply has proved adequate and it is estimated that 95% of the houses are on the main supply. Some use is still made of the former supply to the town from the Conduit. About 60 houses are still supplied from stand-pipes.

Purity of Supplies.

Three reports were received on the bacteriological examination of samples from the main supply to the town. These were all satisfactory. The water is chlorinated at the pumping station at Rindleford. In order to safeguard the consumers it would be advisable to have a monthly bacteriological report on samples from the supply and also that a test for residual chlorine should be made monthly.

Chemical Reports were received on samples from the Hindleford and the Conduit supplies and both were satisfactory. These Reports were as follows:-

Certificate of Analysis dated
24th July, 1951.

Sample of Water Received on 23.6.51.
Marked Main water supply from tap at
College House, Bridgnorth.

In parts per Million of Water:--

Total Solid matter in solution	880
Nitrogen in Nitrates	6.0
Nitrites	----
Chlorine in Chlorides	260
Oxygen absorbed from Permanganate in 4 hrs. at 80°F.	0.2
Free and Saline Ammonia	Nil

Certificate of Analysis (contd) ..

Albuminoid Ammonia	0.01
Lead. Copper. Zinc	Nil
Microscopical Examination of the Sediment	Nil
Temporary Hardness	185
pH. Value	7.3
Permanent Hardness	120

Halogens in Chlorides

Chlorides	26.0
Iodides	0.004
Fluorides	0.05
Bromides	0.02

This sample is satisfactory. This is a hard water. The amount of Halogens present would not in my opinion attack metals.

(Signed) HAROLD LOWE
Public Analyst

Certificate of Analysis
dated 24th July 1951

Sample of Water Received on 23.6.51.
Marked No. 2. Conduit Supply from Tap in
Railway Street, Bridgnorth.

In parts per million of Water:-

Total Solid matter in solution	600
Nitrogen in Nitrates	6.2
Nitrites	---
Chlorine in Chlorides	75
Oxygen absorbed from Permanganate in 4 hrs. at 80°F.	0.12
Free and Saline Ammonia	Nil
Albuminoid Ammonia	0.01
Lead. Copper. Zinc.	Nil (Zinc 6.)
Microscopical Examination of the Sediment	Nil
Temporary Hardness	230
Permanent Hardness	55
pH. Value	7.4

Halogens in Chlorides

Chlorides	75.0
Iodides	0.003
Fluorides	0.05
Bromides	0.02

This sample is satisfactory. The Water is a Hard one. The amount of Halogens present would not in my opinion attack metals.

(Signed) HAROLD LOWE
Public Analyst

Cross Houses.

As a result of an unsatisfactory sample being taken from the stand-pipe at Cross Houses, the water coming from a well at the Punch Bowl, the 3" main was extended by some 340 yards. of spun iron 3" pipe and a number of the houses in this area are now using the town supply.

Squirrel Bank.

In order to improve the supply position in Oldbury Wells a 3" spun iron water main was extended from Pound Street to the junction of Oldbury Wells Road, a distance of 133 yards.

SEWERAGE AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL

The only sewage disposal works at present for the town are at Stanley Lane and were constructed in 1901. In the year 1905 the works dealt with sewage from 124 houses in High Town but now the number of houses connected to the system is 350 approximately. Sewage from the rest of the houses passes untreated into the River Severn - a most unsatisfactory state of affairs, especially as towns lower down the river obtain their water supply from it. There are two out-falls into the river, one on the right bank and one on the left bank.

The disposal works existing at present are of an old fashioned type and are not working efficiently and are over-loaded. The Council have realised for some years the need for a modern disposal plant for the town and plans have been submitted by the Consulting Engineers for a complete scheme for the whole town. The site of the proposed new plant is near the present plant and sewage from Low Town and part of High Town will have to be pumped to it. This increases the cost of the scheme but appears to be the only way in which the sewage from the whole town can be dealt with. Other sites were inspected by the Engineers but were not considered suitable.

In July 1952, an Inspector from the Ministry held an enquiry into the scheme and the Council are now awaiting his Report and it is hoped that permission will be given to proceed with the work. The absence of a sewage disposal scheme is likely to delay the Council's Housing Programme, as further pollution of the River Severn should not be permitted. For this reason alone the urgency of the scheme is obvious.

The Surveyor reports the following improvements to have been carried out during the year:-

(a) Love Lane Sewer.

A new 6" foul sewer has been constructed in order to facilitate development of private dwellings along Love Lane. This sewer was laid via Stanley Lane to discharge to the existing sewage works there. Its length is 485 yards.

(b) Ludlow Road Extension.

An extension of the foul sewer at Ludlow Road was carried out by the laying of 245 yards of a 6" sewer in order to facilitate development of private dwellings.

(c) New Sewage Disposal Scheme.

As already referred to the amended scheme and revised estimates from the Consulting Engineers were submitted to the Ministry during the year and negotiations regarding the acquisition of land for the new works were carried out.

(d) Oldbury.

A survey of the drainage from all the houses in Oldbury affected by the proposed new sewerage scheme was carried out during the year and conditions were found to be most unsatisfactory. The inclusion of Oldbury in the new scheme is therefore a necessity.

(e) Gas Works Drainage.

A complete survey was made of the works buildings and house. It was found that the only liquid of a deleterious character draining into the sewer was about 900 gallons of ammoniacal fluid per 24 hours. Since the survey was made the house drains have been re-laid but the fluid mentioned is still being discharged into the sewer.

(f) Broseley Road.

Further work was carried out by the clearing out of roots which had grown into the sewer at Broseley Road.

(g) New Connections to Sewer.

One old property - No. 20, Underhill Street, was connected to the main sewer while other alterations and improvements were being carried out to the property.

PREVENTION OF DAMAGE BY PESTS ACT, 1949

The scheme which was commenced in 1950, jointly with the Borough of Wenlock, continued to operate quite satisfactorily during the year. Periodic treatment of the sewers and refuse tip was carried out.

REFUSE COLLECTION

There is a weekly collection throughout the Borough and disposal is by 'tipping'.

During the year the collection of Salvage was recommenced and a trailer was purchased for the collection of waste paper.

The total number of Factories in the town is 60, of which 13 are without power and 47 have power. A total of 12 inspections were made and four defects were found and notified to the owners.

In certain cases the Local Authority have a duty to issue certificates regarding arrangements available for escape in case of fire. (This applies where more than twenty persons are employed or where more than ten are working above the first floor). (Section 34). If such a certificate is not obtained the owner is liable to a Penalty.

SECTION D.

HOUSING

Number of inhabited houses	1,942
Number of houses owned by the Council	334
Houses completed in 1951 - Council	52
Private	10
Total	62
Total number of applications for houses	212
Applications for improvement grants	Nil
Number of houses allotted for 1952	50
Private licences granted in 1951	4
Number of houses under construction as at 31st December, 1951.	
(a) By Council	27
(b) By private enterprise	7

The need for new houses remains the most serious problem in all districts of the country. In the larger towns the problem is no doubt larger but in smaller towns and in rural districts the hardships suffered by individual families with no house of their own or with unsuitable or over-crowded accommodation is just as bad as in the great towns.

As well as the actual shortage of houses there is the fact that many of the older houses with low rents are rapidly deteriorating owing to the fact that the owners cannot keep them in proper repair. Rents are controlled and there is security of tenure but prices of materials and costs of labour have more than doubled in late years. In some cases the owners have tried to sell their property at a low price rather than face the cost of repairs. It has been suggested that a revision of rents is now due but very great care would have to be taken if this were carried out and any increase of rent would have to be conditional on the property being put into a fit condition.

The solution of this latter problem is not easy to find. At present there is no slum clearance except in very exceptional circumstances - e.g. where the house is in danger of falling down. The number of houses which will require to be demolished is increasing each year and will continue to increase unless some policy of re-conditioning is put into effect.

Under the Housing Act, 1949, 'improvement grants' were provided for, but this Act has not had the results expected as few owners have applied for such 'grants'. The few exceptions have been almost entirely in the case of owner occupiers.

The Surveyor reports that during the year progress has been made at both the Woodberry Close Site and the Sydney Cottage Estate. It is hoped that the latter will be completed in 1952.

A start has also been made at The Grove where it is planned to build 200 houses.

Nine cases of over-crowding were relieved during the year and one unfit house was demolished and the tenants re-housed.

Repairs to houses were confined to essential repairs necessary to make the houses fit for habitation.

SECTION E.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

Meat.

All meat supplied to the Borough is inspected at the Ministry of Food's Central Abattoir at Wolverhampton. The future policy of the Ministry as regards slaughter-houses has not yet been decided upon, but it is likely that there will not be a return to the old system of a large number of private slaughter-houses throughout the country. The number of these was so great that adequate inspection of the meat was not possible.

Milk.

The Inspector reports that a number of samples of milk were taken during the year and submitted for bacteriological examination. All of these proved satisfactory.

In one case a sample taken by the County Inspector proved to have tubercle bacilli present in it. The herd concerned was examined by the Veterinary Officers of the Ministry of Agriculture and one cow found to be infected was slaughtered.

There are eleven Milk Dealers in the Borough. The Local Authority have now no duty of inspection of farms and dairies where milk is produced. This is now the duty of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Dairies where milk is retailed have still to be inspected by the Officials of the Local Authority.

Ice Cream.

There are 32 sellers of ice cream in the Borough. Of these a total of 31 sell pre-packed ice cream made by one or other of the larger manufacturers. In one case the 'cold mix' process is used - i.e. an ice cream powder is bought in tins and water only is added to this mixture before freezing.

Of 11 samples taken, 8 were in Grade I, 2 in Grade II, and 1 in Grade III. The standard of cleanliness and safety of ice cream as a food has no doubt greatly improved in this country since standards were laid down and regular sampling carried out.

Food Condemned.

During the year a considerable amount of tinned and other foods was condemned and destroyed. It is usual for shop keepers to draw the Inspector's attention to any food they may suspect is unfit for human consumption.

Sheep carcasses	11	Fish	3 stone
Pig carcasses	1	Cheese	2 lbs.
Offal	16 lbs.	Dried milk	161 lbs.
Sausage	19 lbs.	Biscuits	32 lbs.
Cooked meats	72 lbs.	Cake flour	100 pkts.

Tinned meat, ham, vegetables, milk,
fruit, etc. 447 tins.

SECTION F

PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASES

The following cases of Infectious Diseases were notified during the year:-

<u>Disease</u>	<u>Cases notified</u>	<u>Deaths</u>
Measles	53	-
Whooping Cough	34	-
Pneumonia	4	-
Erysipelas	2	-
Food Poisoning	2	-
Puerperal Pyrexia	1	1

It will be seen from the above figures that the Borough has been free from any outbreak of serious infectious disease during the year. No cases of Scarlet Fever, Diphtheria or Acute Poliomyelitis were notified.

The immunisation of the children against Diphtheria has been continued by the County Health Officers and Medical Practitioners in the town. The success which has followed this scheme has been very striking but it is essential that all young children should be immunised at the age of one year if freedom from epidemics of Diphtheria is to continue.

Vaccination of children against Small Pox has declined since it ceased to be compulsory and only about 30 - 40% of the children in the country are now protected. Increased facilities for travel by air has resulted in making it possible for persons incubating this disease to arrive in this country and spread Small Pox before the diagnosis is made.

Infancy is still the best time to have children vaccinated. There are now no Public Vaccinators but all private doctors will vaccinate children when requested to do so.

Many of the infectious diseases which used to account for much sickness and mortality have now almost disappeared - e.g. Typhoid-Fever, Small Pox, Diphtheria - but it must not be thought they cannot again be introduced and become epidemic unless a careful supervision is maintained and measures taken to prevent their spread if cases do occur.

Food Poisoning.

Two separate cases were reported in all and in neither case was it possible to identify the organism responsible or the food involved. No deaths took place.

Tuberculosis.

The number of cases on the Tuberculosis Register for the Borough at the end of the year was as follows:-

<u>Pulmonary</u>		<u>Non-Pulmonary</u>		<u>Total</u>
<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	
23	15	14	26	78

The deaths registered from Tuberculosis numbered five, which gives a death-rate of 0.812 per 1,000. These deaths were from the Pulmonary form of the disease and three were of males and two females.

Now cases numbered nine in all (4 male and 5 female) and they were all pulmonary cases.

New Cases and Deaths in Age Groups

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>New Cases</u>				<u>Deaths</u>			
	M.	<u>Resp.</u> F.	<u>Non-Resp.</u> M.	<u>Non-Resp.</u> F.	<u>Resp.</u> M.	<u>Non-Resp.</u> F.	<u>Resp.</u> M.	<u>Non-Resp.</u> F.
1-5 years		1						
5-15 "		1						
15-25 "		1						
25-35 "	1	1						
35-45 "					1	1		
45-55 "	2				1			
55 and over	1	1			1	1		
Totals:	4	5	-	-	3	2	-	-

The control of Tuberculosis is now chiefly in the hands of the Hospital Boards throughout the country. Since 1948 the Dispensaries and Sanatoria have passed from the County Councils to the Hospital Boards. Local Authorities can still help in the prevention of the disease by giving preference to any Tubercular Families among housing applicants. Each person who is a sufferer and who is at home should have, if possible, a bedroom to him/her-self. This might seem a simple matter to arrange for, but very often such families are unable to pay the rent required for a larger house. If a more suitable house would mean that the patient had to be deprived of sufficient and suitable food then little benefit is obtained from the change.

Cancer.

A total of 19 deaths (8 male and 11 female) from Cancer took place during the year, and this gives a death rate of 3.08 per 1,000 which is higher than the rate for the country. Although Cancer of the lungs has been increasing of recent years, no death from this took place in the Borough in 1951.

Research into the causation of Cancer has so far failed to discover the cause or causes of the disease in the human subject. Until more is known nothing much can be done in the way of prevention.

At present the greatest hope for early cases is by operation and those with signs of any tumour should seek the advice of their doctor at once so that treatment should not be delayed.

Causes of Death.

The following were the causes of death during the year under review. It will be seen that diseases of the heart and circulation - including vascular diseases of the nervous system - accounted for nearly half the total deaths. Most of these conditions and also the deaths from Cancer were among the older age-groups of the population.

<u>Cause of Death</u>	<u>Number of Deaths</u>
Disease of Heart and Circulation	42
Cancer	19
Influenza	7
Bronchitis	7
All other Causes	<u>24</u>
Total:	<u>99</u>
